103D CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

H. R. 1544

To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the State water pollution control revolving loan program, to provide assistance to economically distressed rural communities in the construction of wastewater treatment works and public water systems, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 30, 1993

Mr. Rahall (for himself, Mr. Williams, Mr. Solomon, Mr. Peterson of Minnesota, Mr. Payne of Virginia, Mr. Schiff, Mr. Murphy, Mr. McHugh, Mr. Barcia, Ms. Danner, Mr. Olver, Mr. Fields of Louisiana, Mr. Traficant, Mr. Clyburn, Mr. Sanders, Mr. McCloskey, Mr. Evans, and Mr. Towns) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Public Works and Transportation

A BILL

To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the State water pollution control revolving loan program, to provide assistance to economically distressed rural communities in the construction of wastewater treatment works and public water systems, and for other purposes.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

- 2 This Act may be cited as the "Rural Community
- 3 Environmental Assistance Act of 1993".
- 4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
- 5 Congress finds that—
- 6 (1) rural communities face special problems in 7 providing for infrastructure facilities to protect the 8 environment and human health, including 9 wastewater treatment works and public water sys-10 tems:
- 11 (2) rural communities often lack the economies 12 of scale which are necessary to provide an adequate 13 financial base for the construction and operation of 14 wastewater treatment works and public water sys-15 tems;
 - (3) rural communities often have limited access to financial markets due to limited management capabilities and limited access to financial and technical services;
 - (4) the Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that between 21 percent and 30 percent of rural communities will have difficulty using revenue bonds for wastewater treatment works and public water systems because of limited financial resources;
 - (5) many rural communities have not benefited from existing financing and assistance programs of

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- the Federal Government for wastewater treatment works and public water systems because such assistance programs are often focused on the largest environmental problems caused by larger municipalities;
 - (6) Federal grant assistance programs for wastewater treatment have been phased out in favor of State loan funds;
 - (7) some rural communities will have limited access to such State loan funds and some economically distressed rural communities may be unable to comply with pollution control requirements without grant assistance;
 - (8) residents of rural communities often spend a larger portion of their household income for environmental services than residents of large communities;
 - (9) recent amendments to Federal environmental laws will require additional efforts by rural communities to address environmental problems and will require rural communities to devote a larger percentage of their resources to these efforts;
 - (10) many public water systems serving rural communities are inadequate or insufficient to provide for existing and future needs and have deteriorated to the degree that a reliable supply of water

- is in jeopardy and large quantities of water are being wasted or may be wasted;
- 11) the National Council on Public Works Improvement recently concluded that a "national problem does exist for small water systems . . . and . . . these small water systems operate on a marginal basis, with inadequate financial resources to correct existing deficiencies . . .";
 - (12) the Environmental Protection Agency has reported that small water systems serve 8 percent of the United States population, but account for more than 90 percent of the violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act;
 - (13) the Environmental Protection Agency has reported that 80 percent of the communities in violation of sewage treatment requirements are rural communities and that rural community sewage treatment needs exceed \$28,000,000,000;
 - (14) it is essential that the Federal Government play a more active role in providing financial assistance to rural communities for the construction of wastewater treatment works and public water systems;
- 24 (15) it is essential that the Federal Government 25 make a special effort to provide financial assistance,

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1 including grant assistance, to rural communities 2 which are economically disadvantaged; and (16) it is essential that the Federal Government 3 expand and strengthen technical assistance and outreach programs to assist rural communities in com-6 plying with environmental requirements and the con-7 struction, operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation 8 of wastewater treatment works and public water sys-9 tems. 10 SEC. 3. PURPOSES. 11 The purposes of this Act are— 12 (1) to assist economically distressed rural com-13 munities in financing the planning and construction 14 of wastewater treatment works and public water sys-15 tems; and 16 (2) to expand and strengthen programs for pro-17 viding technical assistance to economically distressed 18 rural communities on issues relating to operation, 19 management, and maintenance of wastewater treatment works and public water systems. 20 21 SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. Section 607 of the Federal Water Pollution Control 22 23 Act (33 U.S.C. 1387) is amended— (1) by striking "and" at the end of paragraph 24

(4); and

1	(2) by striking paragraph (5) and inserting the
2	following new paragraphs:
3	"(5) \$2,000,000,000 for fiscal year 1994;
4	"(6) \$2,300,000,000 for fiscal year 1995;
5	"(7) \$2,700,000,000 for fiscal year 1996;
6	"(8) \$3,000,000,000 for fiscal year 1997;
7	"(9) \$3,500,000,000 for fiscal year 1998; and
8	"(10) \$4,000,000,000 per fiscal year for each
9	of fiscal years 1999 and 2000.".
10	SEC. 5. ASSISTANCE FOR ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED
11	RURAL COMMUNITIES.
12	(a) Capitalization Grant Agreements.—Section
13	602(b) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33
14	U.S.C. 1382(b)) is amended—
15	(1) by striking "and" at the end of paragraph
16	(9);
17	(2) by striking the period at the end of para-
18	graph (10) and inserting "; and; and
19	(3) by adding after paragraph (10) the follow-
20	ing new paragraph:
21	"(11) the State will comply with the require-
22	ments of part B of this title.".
23	(b) Rural Community Environmental Assist-
24	ANCE ACCOUNT.—

1	(1) IN GENERAL.—Title VI of such Act (33
2	U.S.C. 1382–1387) is amended by adding at the end
3	the following:
4	"PART B—ASSISTANCE FOR ECONOMICALLY
5	DISTRESSED RURAL COMMUNITIES
6	"SEC. 651. ESTABLISHMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITY ENVI-
7	RONMENTAL ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTS.
8	"(a) In General.—Each State shall establish a
9	rural community environmental assistance account in the
10	water pollution control revolving loan fund established by
11	the State pursuant to this title.
12	"(b) Deposits.—
13	"(1) IN GENERAL.—The rural community envi-
14	ronmental assistance account of a State under this
15	part shall consist of amounts deposited into the ac-
16	count in accordance with this subsection, repayments
17	of principal and interest from loans made with such
18	amounts, and any interest or other proceeds derived
19	from such amounts.
20	"(2) Amounts from grant payments.—A
21	State shall deposit into the rural community envi-
22	ronmental assistance account of the State under this
23	part not less than 25 percent of the amount of each
24	grant payment received by the State under section
25	601 after the date of the enactment of this part.

- "(3) Matching requirement.—A State shall 1 2 deposit into the rural community environmental assistance account of the State under this part from 3 State monies an amount equal to at least 5 percent of the amount deposited into such account under 6 paragraph (2). Amounts subject to the matching re-7 quirement of this paragraph shall not be subject to any matching requirement under a capitalization 8 9 grant agreement entered into under section 602.
- "(4) Unobligated balance.—A State may deposit into the rural community environmental assistance account of the State under this part any portion of the unobligated balance, on the date of the enactment of this part, of the State's water pollution control revolving loan fund.
- "(c) Requirements.—Amounts in the rural community environmental assistance account of a State under this part shall be subject to the requirements of this part and, except as otherwise provided by this part, shall not be subject to the requirements of part (A) of this title.
- 21 "SEC. 652. RURAL COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSIST-
- 22 ANCE ACCOUNT FUNDS.
- "(a) PROJECTS ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE.—Except as otherwise provided by this part, amounts in the rural community environmental assistance account of a State

1	under this part may be used only for projects, which are
2	included in an intended use plan approved by the Adminis-
3	trator pursuant to section 653, for the construction of
4	wastewater treatment works and public water systems in
5	economically distressed rural communities.
6	"(b) Types of Assistance.—Except as otherwise
7	limited by State law, amounts in the rural community en-
8	vironmental assistance account of a State under this part
9	may be used only—
10	"(1) to make loans to economically distressed
11	rural communities on the condition that—
12	"(A) such loans are made at or below mar-
13	ket interest rates, including interest free loans,
14	at terms not to exceed 30 years;
15	"(B) annual principal and interest pay-
16	ments will commence not later than 3 years
17	after completion of a project and all loans will
18	be fully amortized not later than 30 years after
19	completion of a project;
20	"(C) the recipient of a loan will establish
21	a dedicated source of revenue for repayment of
22	loans; and
23	"(D) the recipient of a loan agrees to
24	repay the loan and the account will be credited

- with all payments of principal and interest on the loan;
- "(2) to make grants to economically distressed rural communities on the condition that such grants do not exceed 75 percent of the costs of eligible projects or 85 percent of the costs of eligible innovative projects (as such term is used in section 201(g)(5) of this Act);
 - "(3) as a source of revenue or security for the payment of principal and interest on revenue or general obligation bonds issued by the State if the proceeds of the sale of such bonds will be deposited in the account;
 - "(4) to earn interest on amounts in the account; and
 - "(5) to pay the reasonable costs of (A) administering the account, (B) conducting activities under this part, and (C) establishing a Rural Environmental Infrastructure Advisory Panel under section 654; except that total of such costs may not exceed 6 percent of the balance of the account.
- "(c) ADMINISTRATION.—Amounts in the rural community environmental assistance account of a State under this part shall be administered by the same instrumental-

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- 1 ity which administers other amounts in the State's water
- 2 pollution control revolving loan fund.
- 3 "(d) Interest Rates.—Subject to subsection
- 4 (b)(1)(A), each State shall establish criteria for determin-
- 5 ing the rate of interest to be charged on a loan made with
- 6 amounts in the rural community environmental assistance
- 7 account of a State under this part. Such criteria shall pro-
- 8 vide that a lower rate of interest will be charged on loans
- 9 for eligible projects in communities which have lower pop-
- 10 ulation levels and lower income levels.
- 11 "(e) Grants.—Subject to subsection (b)(2), each
- 12 State shall establish criteria for determining the amount
- 13 of assistance to be provided under this section in the form
- 14 of grants for an eligible project. Such criteria shall provide
- 15 that a higher percentage of the total cost of the project
- 16 will be provided in the form of grants for eligible projects
- 17 in communities which have lower population levels and
- 18 lower income levels.
- 19 "(f) Consistency With Planning Require-
- 20 MENTS.—
- 21 "(1) WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS.—A
- 22 State may provide financial assistance with amounts
- from the rural community environmental assistance
- 24 account of the State under this part only with re-
- spect to a wastewater treatment works which is con-

- sistent with plans, if any, developed under sections 205(j), 208, 303(e), 319, and 320 of this Act.
- 3 "(2) Public water systems.—A State may 4 provide financial assistance with amounts from the 5 rural community environmental assistance account 6 of the State under this part only with respect to a 7 public water system which is approved by the chief 8 executive officer of the State agency with primary 9 enforcement authority pursuant to section 1413 of 10 the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- "(g) PRIORITY.—In providing assistance with amounts from the rural community environmental assistance account of the State under this part, the State shall give priority to an economically distressed rural community in which—
 - "(1) there is a documented need for collector sewers and interceptors in order to improve access to wastewater treatment facilities;
- "(2) residents rely on inadequate individual wastewater treatment facilities such as outhouses, failing septic systems, or cesspools that are determined by public health officials to be a hazard to the community;

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- "(3) residents rely on public water systems
 which do not meet the requirements of the Safe
 Drinking Water Act; or
- "(4) residents rely on inadequate individual drinking water systems such as contaminated wells that are determined by local public health to be a hazard to the community.
- "(h) Innovative Projects.—A State may provide assistance with amounts from the rural community environmental assistance account of the State under this part for eligible innovative projects (as such term is used in section 201(g)(5) of this Act) only after conducting a costbenefit analysis of such project. Such analysis shall include an evaluation of the long-term operation and mainte-

16 "SEC. 653. INTENDED USE PLAN.

nance costs associated with the project.

17 "(a) IN GENERAL.—

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"(1) CONTENTS.—Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, each State shall prepare and submit to the Administrator a plan, approved by the State's Rural Environmental Infrastructure Advisory Panel under section 654, identifying the intended uses of the amounts available to the rural community environmental assistance account of the State under this

1	part. Such intended use plan shall include, but not
2	be limited to—
3	"(A) a list of those projects for construc-
4	tion of wastewater treatment works and public
5	water systems which are pending;
6	"(B) a description of the short- and long-
7	term goals and objectives of the account;
8	"(C) information on the activities to be
9	supported, including a description of project
10	categories, terms of financial assistance, and
11	economically distressed rural communities
12	served;
13	"(D) assurances and specific proposals to
14	ensure that all funds in the account will be ex-
15	pended in an expeditious and timely manner;
16	"(E) the criteria and method established
17	for the allocation of funds to proposed projects;
18	"(F) the criteria established for determin-
19	ing the interest rate on loans made with
20	amounts from the account; and
21	"(G) the criteria established for determin-
22	ing the amount of assistance to be provided
23	under this section in the form of grants for an
24	eligible project.

1	"(2) REVIEW.—The Administrator shall review
2	each plan developed pursuant to this subsection for
3	a fiscal year and shall approve or disapprove such
4	plan.
5	"(3) Public review and comment.—The
6	State shall provide for public review and comment
7	on the plan developed pursuant to this section.
8	"(b) Reservation of Funds for Planning.—
9	Each State shall reserve each fiscal year 1 percent of the
10	sums in the rural community environmental assistance ac-
11	count of the State under this part to carry out planning
12	and related activities pursuant to this section.
13	"SEC. 654. RURAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE AD-
13 14	"SEC. 654. RURAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE AD- VISORY PANEL.
14	VISORY PANEL.
14 15 16	visory panel. "(a) In General.—A State may submit an intended
14 15 16 17	VISORY PANEL. "(a) IN GENERAL.—A State may submit an intended use plan to the Administrator under section 653 only if
14 15 16 17	visory panel. "(a) In General.—A State may submit an intended use plan to the Administrator under section 653 only if such plan has been approved by a Rural Environmental
14 15 16 17 18	visory panel. "(a) In General.—A State may submit an intended use plan to the Administrator under section 653 only if such plan has been approved by a Rural Environmental Infrastructure Advisory Panel which has been established
14 15 16 17 18 19	visory panel. "(a) In General.—A State may submit an intended use plan to the Administrator under section 653 only if such plan has been approved by a Rural Environmental Infrastructure Advisory Panel which has been established by the State in accordance with this section.
14 15 16 17 18 19 20	visory panel. "(a) In General.—A State may submit an intended use plan to the Administrator under section 653 only if such plan has been approved by a Rural Environmental Infrastructure Advisory Panel which has been established by the State in accordance with this section. "(b) Duties.—It shall be the duty of a panel established
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	"(a) In General.—A State may submit an intended use plan to the Administrator under section 653 only if such plan has been approved by a Rural Environmental Infrastructure Advisory Panel which has been established by the State in accordance with this section. "(b) Duties.—It shall be the duty of a panel established under this section in a fiscal year—

- "(2) to review the State's intended use plan under section 653 for such fiscal year and to approve or disapprove such plan.
- 4 "(c) Membership.—A panel established by a State 5 under this section shall consist of 10 members appointed 6 by the Governor of the State as follows:
- "(1) One individual who is a representative of
 the instrumentality which administers the State's
 water pollution control revolving loan fund.
 - "(2) One individual who is a representative of the State agency which is primarily responsible for carrying out the State's responsibilities under the Safe Drinking Water Act.
 - "(3) One individual who is a representative of an entity in the State which receives funds to assist nonentitlement areas under the Community Development Block Grant Program established under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.
 - "(4) One individual who is a representative of an entity in the State which receives funds under the water and waste facility loan and grant program established by section 306 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

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1	"(5) One individual who is a representative of
2	the State agency which is primarily responsible for
3	regulating private utilities.
4	"(6) One individual who is a representative of
5	a regional planning agency.
6	"(7) On individual who is a representative of
7	the Rural Community Assistance Program.
8	"(8) One individual who is a representative of
9	the State's Rural Water Association.
10	"(9) One individual who is a representative of
11	a local government.
12	"(10) One individual who is a representative of
13	local or county health department or agency.
14	"(d) TERM.—Each member shall be appointed for a
15	term of 2 years.
16	"(e) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on a panel established
17	under this section shall be filled in the manner in which
18	the original appointment was made.
19	"(f) PAY.—Members shall serve without pay but may
20	receive travel expenses.
21	"(g) CHAIRPERSON.—The chairperson of a panel es-
22	tablished under this section shall be elected by the mem-

23 bers.

- 1 "(h) MEETINGS.—A panel established under this sec-
- 2 tion shall conduct at least 3 meetings during each fiscal
- 3 year.
- 4 "SEC. 655. AUDITS, REPORTS, AND FISCAL CONTROLS.
- 5 "(a) FISCAL CONTROL AND AUDITING PROCE-
- 6 DURES.—Each State shall establish fiscal controls and ac-
- 7 counting procedures sufficient to ensure proper accounting
- 8 during appropriate accounting periods for—
- 9 "(1) deposits made into the rural community
- environmental assistance account of the State under
- 11 this part;
- 12 "(2) disbursements made from the account; and
- 13 "(3) account balances at the beginning and end
- of the accounting period.
- 15 "(b) Annual Federal Audits.—The Adminis-
- 16 trator shall, at least on an annual basis, conduct or require
- 17 each State to have independently conducted such reviews
- 18 and audits as may be deemed necessary or appropriate
- 19 by the Administrator to carry out the objectives of this
- 20 section. Audits of the use of funds deposited in the rural
- 21 community environmental assistance account of the State
- 22 shall be conducted in accordance with the auditing proce-
- 23 dures of the General Accounting Office, including chapter
- 24 75 of title 31, United States Code.

"(c) Annual Report.—Beginning 60 days after the 1 end of the first fiscal year beginning after the date of the enactment of this part, the State shall submit an annual 3 4 report to the Administrator describing how the State has met the goals and objectives for the previous fiscal year as identified in the plan prepared for such year pursuant to section 653(a), including identification of loan and grant recipients, loan and grant amounts, and terms and 8 similar details on other forms of financial assistance provided from the rural community environmental assistance 10 account of the State under this part.

"(d) Noncompliance.—

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- "(1) NOTIFICATION.—If the Administrator determines that a State has not complied with the requirements of this part, the Administrator shall notify the State of such noncompliance and the necessary corrective action.
- "(2) WITHHOLDING OF PAYMENTS.—If a State does not take corrective action within 60 days after the date a State receives notification of noncompliance under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall withhold the minimum amounts to be deposited in the rural community environmental assistance account of the State under this part until the Adminis-

- trator is satisfied that the State has taken the necessary corrective action.
- 3 "(3) REALLOTMENT.—If the Administrator is not satisfied that adequate correction actions have been taken by the State on or before the date which 5 6 is 12 months after the date on which the State is 7 notified of noncompliance, the payments withheld from the State by the Administrator under section 8 (2) shall be made available for reallotment in accord-9 ance with the formula for allotment of funds under 10 11 this Act.

12 "SEC. 656. DEFINITIONS.

- "For the purposes of this part, the following definitions apply:
- "(1) Construction.—The term 'construction' 15 16 shall have the same meaning as such term has under 17 section 212(1) of this Act; except that such term 18 shall be construed to apply to public water systems 19 as well as wastewater treatment works and such 20 term shall include acquisition of lands, easements, and rights-of-way for use as a site on which to locate 21 22 a public water system or wastewater treatment 23 works.

1	"(2) Economically distressed rural com-
2	MUNITY.—The term 'economically distressed rural
3	community' means a rural community in which—
4	"(A) the median household income of the
5	residents of such community is less than 75
6	percent of the statewide non-metropolitan
7	household income, as determined by the latest
8	decennial census of the United States; or
9	"(B) the rate of poverty for the residents
10	of such community is greater than the national
11	poverty rate, as determined annually by the Of-
12	fice of Management and Budget.
13	"(3) Public water system.—The term 'pub-
14	lic water system' shall have the same meaning as
15	such term has under section 1401(4) of the Safe
16	Drinking Water Act.
17	"(4) Rural community.—The term 'rural
18	community' means a municipality—
19	"(A) which is located in a non-metropoli-
20	tan county and which has a population of 5,000
21	individuals or less, as determined by the latest
22	decennial census of the United States; or
23	"(B) the wastewater treatment works or
24	drinking water facility for which assistance is

1	sought has fewer then 1,000 service connec-
2	tions.
3	"(5) Wastewater treatment works.—The
4	term 'wastewater treatment works' shall have the
5	same meaning as the term 'treatment works' has
6	under section 212(2) of this Act.".
7	(2) Conforming amendment.—Title VI of
8	such Act is further amended by inserting after the
9	heading for such title the following:
10	"PART A—GENERAL FUNDS".
11	SEC. 6. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ECONOMICALLY DIS-
12	TRESSED RURAL COMMUNITIES.
13	(a) Grants.—The Administrator of the Environ-
14	mental Protection Agency shall make grants to appro-
15	priate regional, State, and local agencies and not-for-profit
16	organizations to assist economically distressed rural com-
17	munities (as defined in part B of the Federal Water Pollu-
18	tion Control Act) by providing technical assistance for the
19	financing, operation, management, and maintenance of
20	wastewater treatment works and public water systems.
21	(b) Eligibility.—The Administrator shall make
22	grants under subsection (a) only to those regional, State,
23	and local agencies and not-for-profit organizations which
24	have an established record for providing technical assist-
25	ance to economically distressed rural communities.

- (c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Technical assistance 1 provided to economically distressed rural communities with amounts from grants made available under this section shall include 1 or more of the following: 5 (1) providing information and guidance con-6 cerning compliance with requirements of the Federal 7 Water Pollution Control Act and the Safe Drinking 8 Water Act: 9 (2) providing information and guidance on the 10 operation and management of wastewater treatment 11 works and public water systems, including budget-12 ing, user charge structures, operator training, and 13 maintenance schedules to ensure compliance with 14 the requirements referred to in paragraph (1); 15 (3) providing assistance to areas which are not 16 served by wastewater treatment works or public 17 water systems in order to develop the operations and
 - standards;

 (4) providing assistance to facilitate the consolidation or restructuring of wastewater treatment works and public drinking water systems in order to

management capacity necessary to develop and

maintain such facilities in compliance with Federal

improve the capacity of such facilities; and

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- 1 (5) providing assistance to develop long-term fi-2 nancial strategies to address overall water quality 3 needs.
- 4 (d) Funding.—The Administrator shall set aside for
- 5 fiscal year 1994, and each fiscal year thereafter, for mak-
- 6 ing grants under this section not to exceed 1.5 percent
- 7 of the amounts appropriated in such fiscal year pursuant
- 8 to section 607 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

9 SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

- 10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The first sentence of section
- 11 516(b)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act is
- 12 amended—
- 13 (1) by striking "; and (D)" and inserting ";
- 14 (D)"; and
- 15 (2) by inserting before the period at the end the
- following: "; (E) an estimate of the costs of rehabili-
- tating, replacing, and upgrading public water sys-
- tems nationally and by State; (F) an estimate of the
- 19 costs of construction of expanded or new publicly
- owned treatment works and public water systems
- 21 nationally and by State, including an estimate of the
- portion of such costs associated with meeting the re-
- quirements of this Act; (G) an estimate of the per-
- centage of the costs described in subparagraphs (B),
- 25 (C), (D), (E), and (F) associated with publicly

- owned treatment works and public water systems
- 2 serving economically distressed rural communities as
- defined under section 656 of this Act.".
- 4 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by sub-
- 5 section (a) shall only apply to reports required under sec-
- 6 tion 516(b)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
- 7 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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